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~ ~ People Are Talking! ~  
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inventory of Xbox 360 consoles, with availability varying by country." The Xbox 360's current retail price is \$199.99, in a bundle with a 500 GB system and a copy of Forza Horizon 2.

Microsoft launched the Xbox 360 on Nov. 22, 2005, in North America; the console turned 10 years old last November. That same month, Microsoft added Xbox 360 backward compatibility to the Xbox One, a feature the company had announced at E3 2015.

Spencer noted that Microsoft will continue to support the Xbox 360 for the foreseeable future, with full Xbox Live services for apps and online gaming; free Games With Gold titles; deals for Xbox Live Gold subscribers; and hardware support. However, Microsoft's third-party partners have begun to retire Xbox 360 services, such as ESPN, which shut down its app on the console last month.

"The Xbox 360 helped redefine an entire generation of gaming at Microsoft," said Spencer. "I am incredibly proud of all of the work and dedication that went into development of the Xbox 360 hardware, services and games portfolio over the last decade. And I'm grateful to the fans for their continued passion and support."

To take a trip back through time, check out Microsoft's unveiling of the Xbox 360 during "MTV Presents Xbox: The Next Generation Revealed," a half-hour special that aired May 12, 2005, on MTV.

<http://www.polygon.com/2015/5/12/8595429/xbox-360-reveal-mtv-microsoft>

## Report Reveals Minecraft Sells Upwards of 10,000 Copies Every Day

New York Times Magazine has published a detailed breakdown of the Minecraft phenomenon revealing that, five years on from the title's initial launch, Mojang and Microsoft's sandbox game continues to sell upwards of 10,000 copies every day.

That's an eye-watering statistic, and proof if ever it was needed that Minecraft is right up there with the industry's sales juggernauts.

Clive Thompson was the scribe behind the astute think piece, noting that the average Minecraft player is between 28 and 29, with women representing 40 percent of the overall user base.

Here's a brief extract from the comprehensive article:

Minecraft is an incredibly complex game, but it's also at first inscrutable. When you begin, no pop-ups explain what to do; there isn't even a help section. You just have to figure things out yourself. (The exceptions are the Xbox and PlayStation versions, which in December added tutorials.) This unwelcoming air contrasts with most large games these days, which tend to come with elaborate training sessions on how to move, how to aim, how to shoot. In Minecraft, nothing explains that skeletons will kill you, or that if you dig deep enough you might hit lava (which will also kill you), or even that you can craft a pickaxe.

Further in the piece, Clive Thompson goes on to highlight that

Minecraft's greatest feat is that it largely leaves players to their own devices and is all the better for it.

## Dead Star Review

Around a year ago Atari launched Asteroids: Outpost on Steam, a miserable mess that left fans of the arcade classic dumbfounded as to why Atari had turned the top-down space shooter into a sandbox survival game. In an ideal world they would have given Dead Star creators Armature who are also currently working on Xbox One exclusive ReCore the Asteroids rights. Dead Star is pretty much what Asteroids could have potentially evolved into, had the Atari we knew and loved kept with the times.

The premise is simple yet sound. 10v10 online battles against Scavengers and Drifters to capture and control as many bases within the asteroid littered battlegrounds as possible. The idea is to push the enemy back to their main base and take down its defences, all while keeping control of other zones.

Retaining control results in victory, as well as a screen-filling explosion showing the enemy base being blown to smithereens. As it just so happens, Dead Star has a rather nifty line of explosions. Alluring smoke plumes, too.

Dead Star doesn't feature an assortment of maps as such, simply different hex formations with every zone including a base to battle over. Asteroids, space wreckage and toxic storms fill the voids. When a battle commences both teams are as far apart as possible, and because other bases are occupied by AI controlled drones that have to be cleared out first, it's usually uncommon to come across a rival within the first few minutes of play.

It's also wise to begin a battle by improving defences some asteroids contain valuable ore that can be consumed to affix turrets and mines to bases. As it's possible to gain XP from doing so, observing players base boosting rather than engaging the enemy isn't rare.

As previously stated, the set-up is simple. The real depth lies within experimenting and upgrading the wide choice of spacecraft, while fine-tuning those all-important twin-stick shooting skills. Nine spacecraft feature a mixture of small, medium and large with the obvious pros and cons and before battle commences three have to be chosen to form a loadout.

Getting to grips with each takes a notable amount of time, and this isn't always a pleasurable pursuit. Drifting slowly through space in a bulky cruiser is far from exhilarating. Indeed, picking the right craft for the current state of battle plays a key part in each success. Over time you'll no doubt find the perfect trio, and chances are you'll end up sticking with them too.

It's the assortment of weapons that makes the craft stand out from one another. Charged shots, homing missiles, slow burning beams, explosive rounds, short-range teleportation and more each has five different distinct abilities, slowly unlocked and

upgraded during battle. Generally speaking, primary fire can be dealt in all directions while charged shots can only be fired forward. The latter are devastating, but larger craft in particular are reduced to sitting duck status while charging up these shots. Learning when and where to use certain manoeuvres can make a huge difference in the K/D ratio.

Field of vision is also incredibly narrow, as is the spread of fire two things clearly intentional in order to keep battles balanced. Sadly though, Dead Star lacks balancing elsewhere. This isn't a shooter that's constantly tense or thrilling, which is all down to the ebb and flow of battle being all over the place.

It's forgivable that battles start as silently as The Force Awakens finale players are busy capturing bases and preparing for an all-out turf war. But more often than not the promise of large scale space battles is never fulfilled. Once bases are bolstered they become incredibly tough to take over, and so this isn't the kind of online shooter where a team will be winning by a huge lead one minute and then close to defeat the next. The team that bags the most bases early on always seems to win, no matter how many experienced players are on the opposing side.

It certainly doesn't help that the matchmaking service has an irritating habit of placing newcomers in losing teams, in order to fill the slots left by those who have given up hope. Likewise, it doesn't assist matters that players don't seem keen to form strategies, despite voice chat and icon-driven communication being present. This isn't the developer's fault of course; it's down to players not working as a team.

Maybe over time Dead Star will attract a small cult following that will put the time and effort in, learning its nuances and playing it in a similar dedicated manner to other competitive shooters out there. It has clearly been designed for the long haul the Escape Run mode, which promises big rewards, is yet to be made available. All signs point to the game's future not just being in the hands of the developers but also the community. As of now, it's a slim but focused shooter that's likely to drive players away due to severe limitations.

## Have Modded Vintage Games? Fine By Us, Sega Says

Playing modded console games on a PC or Mac is a gray area legally, especially if you don't own the physical game. But the scarcity of many titles from the 1980s and 1990s leaves vintage games fans with few other options.

Sega understands that conundrum and wants to help solve it with the new "Mega Drive Classics Hub," a front-end for emulated Sega ROMs that people already own on Steam. The Mega Drive console, known as the Genesis in the US, went on sale in 1988 and has an extensive library of 16-bit games, many of which are on Steam.

The Classics Hub, which includes support for more than 40 Genesis titles, will be available on April 28 as a free update for Steam

users. It will support controllers, keyboards, optional graphics enhancement filters, and the ability to save at any point during game play.

It also supports access to Steam Workshop for all compatible titles. That means players will be able to share modified versions of their classic games. Yes, you read that right: Sega is explicitly sanctioning mods, with the obvious caveat that you must already own the game in Steam. This may be the first time any console game maker has explicitly allowed people to distribute modified copies of its classic titles in any form, according to Ars Technica.

Sega didn't share details on the modification options, but hinted on Twitter that it would have more information next week.

As for the front-end architecture, Sega unabashedly describes it as "based on a bedroom of an early nineties SEGA fan." In other words, it will be nothing like the sleek, Mac-inspired design of OpenEmu, another popular front-end for emulators.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -          Online Users Growl & Purr!
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# Atari Still Exists, Thinks No One Else Can Make A Haunted House Game

The shambling, ghostly shell of a company that shares its name with the classic game maker Atari went to the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) this week to defend its exclusive rights to video games with Haunted House in the title.

The oral hearing at the USPTO yesterday came about when Atari opposed a proposed trademark for Haunted House Tycoon, an upcoming game that small developer Hazy Dreams of Infinity tried to trademark back in 2011. In its opposition notice, Atari suggested that its 1982 game Haunted House had become "well-known among the public and the trade" due to "widespread and extensive use."

Atari does have some valid current interest in its right to the 35-year-old game name. Haunted House is on iOS as part of the Atari's Greatest Hits collection, and the game became available through Microsoft's Game Room service starting in 2010. Atari also rebooted the franchise in 2010 with a remake of the same name, which it still sells as a Windows download.

But Atari's legal interest in defending the Haunted House name is quite recent. The company didn't even file a trademark for the game until 2010 (when the remake was released). In the intervening years, a handful of games with the Haunted House name had been released without legal issue, including a 2004

fan-remake of the Atari VCS original.

While Atari's Haunted House is probably the best-known game with the title, it's not the first game to bear the name. That honor likely belongs to 1972's Haunted House on the Magnavox Odyssey (a TRS-80 Haunted House from 1980 also predates Atari's release). And before video games even existed, of course, the haunted house was a well-known general concept that players could easily recognize apart from any specific, trademarked video game idea.

Microsoft is suing the Department of Justice (DoJ) to protest the gag order that prevents technology companies from telling their customers when their cloud data is handed over to authorities.

In layman's terms, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) allows the government to issue gag orders saying that the people or companies involved in a legal case cannot talk about the case or anything related to it in public.

So, the government is continuously forcing tech companies to hand over their customers' emails or personal records stored in the cloud servers without their clients' knowledge.

Microsoft has filed a lawsuit [PDF] against the DoJ, arguing that it is "unconstitutional" and violates constitutional protection of free speech to force the tech companies for not informing their customers when their stored data has been shared with authorities.

We believe these actions violate two of the fundamental rights that have been part of this country since its founding. These lengthy and even permanent secrecy orders violate the Fourth Amendment, which gives people and businesses the right to know if the government searches or seizes their property. Brad Smith, Chief counsel at Microsoft, said in a blog post.

They also violate the First Amendment, which guarantees our right to talk to customers about how government action is affecting their data.

According to Microsoft, the company has received nearly 2,600 gag orders in the past 18 months. Though the issue is not with the concept of government searches, but with the indefinite period of those orders.

Actually, the gag orders come with a definite time after which the company can reveal their customers if any police or FBI agent has checked or inspected their emails or files stored in the cloud.

But Microsoft said about 70 percent of all gag orders received by the company had no fixed end date, which means the company can never tell its users, even after the completion of the investigation.

While today's lawsuit is important, we believe there's an opportunity for the Department of Justice to adopt a new policy that sets reasonable limitations on the use of these types of secrecy orders, Brad said.

The gag orders are meant to protect nation investigations, but the US government is misusing it to carry out unconstitutional secret data searches without ever telling people.

Just like Apple, it is important for Microsoft to fight and win this battle for protecting users privacy, as well as their reputation.

#### Google Says Google.com Is 'Partially Dangerous'

A Google 'Safe Browsing' report says Google.com is 'partially dangerous.' Yes, yes, hilarious fail, but there is a serious side to the story.

Obviously, it's caused countless ironic jokes at Google's expense. But in a sense, its report is actually correct - there is a lot of risky stuff on Google's user-generated-content properties. Blogspot, Groups, Drive, Sites... even Google Plus (although that's a ghost town, natch). It's a hot mess.

Here's the thing: When users get used to spurious warnings popping up, they quickly ignore them. That's well documented. Nope, the sky isn't falling, so how can we best protect users from the nastier corners of the Web?

#### Microsoft and Google Say They'll Play Nice With Each Other

But they still plan to compete vigorously.

Maybe even bitter enemies can sometimes find a way to hug it out.

Microsoft and Google have decided that they will no longer issue regulatory complaints against each other both in the U.S. and abroad, the companies confirmed to Fortune. The industry giants added, however, that they wouldn't stop competing against each other.

Our companies compete vigorously, but we want to do so on the merits of our products, not in legal proceedings, a Google spokesperson said in a statement. As a result, following our patent agreement, we've now agreed to withdraw regulatory complaints against one another.

For its part, Microsoft issued an eerily similar statement, saying that like Google, it plans to compete against the search giant, but not get involved with regulatory complaints.

Microsoft has agreed to withdraw its regulatory complaints against Google, reflecting our changing legal priorities, the Microsoft spokesperson said in a statement. We will continue to focus on competing vigorously for business and for customers.

The timing couldn't be better for Google, which is facing serious trouble in the EU.

Earlier this week, the EU's European Commission (EC) leveled charges against Google over its Android mobile operating system. The EC, which had been investigating Android, charged Google with illegally preventing competition in the marketplace. The EC specifically charged Google with requesting manufacturers install



its Search and Chrome browser on Android devices in order to use its Play Store, stopping vendors from using other, non-Google versions of Android, and issuing payments to companies and mobile operators for using Google as its default search engine.

Google pursues an overall strategy on mobile devices to protect and expand its dominant position in Internet search, Margrethe Vestager, the EU competition commissioner, said at a press conference on Wednesday. Dominant companies have a responsibility not to abuse their dominant position by restricting competition.

Vestager added that Google, which has 90% market share in Europe, has created an environment that hampers the development of viable versions of Android which could develop into credible platforms for competing apps and services.

For its part, Google disagreed with the findings, saying that Android has helped foster a remarkable and, importantly, sustainable ecosystem, based on open-source software and open innovation.

Vestager's complaint, called a statement of objections, could cost Google up to 10% of its global revenue, if it is ultimately found guilty of anti-competitive behavior.

This is the second bit of trouble Google is facing in the EU. Google was charged last year with antitrust behavior by promoting comparison-shopping services in search results. The EU argues Google has given its own shopping services favorable treatment. Google owns 90% of the EU search market, as well.

While the deal between Microsoft and Google has been in the works for the last several months, the timing is rather interesting, if nothing else.

Microsoft had been one of the more vocal critics of Google's search dominance in the EU, saying that Google was abusing its position as the top search provider in the euro zone. Microsoft was even a member of FairSearch, a coalition of companies that includes travel sites Trip Advisor and Expedia, and the biggest complainant against Google in the EU. Microsoft has left the group, as well as the Initiative For a Competitive Online Marketplace (ICOMP), which was founded in 2008 and includes more than 70 companies from around the world.

While Microsoft faced most of its regulatory troubles before Google, the search giant hasn't been silent about its feelings towards Microsoft. Google and Microsoft have had a contentious relationship over the years and it wasn't uncommon over the years for their former chief executives, Eric Schmidt and Steve Ballmer, to trade barbs.

Now, though, things are different. Under the leadership of Google's Sundar Pichai and Microsoft's Satya Nadella, tensions are cooled and the companies enjoy a far more respectful relationship.

In September, the companies even illustrated that thaw, when they announced they would drop all patent-related lawsuits between them. The companies were at the time engaged in about 20 lawsuits over a wide range of technologies, including mobile phones, wireless connectivity, and Internet video. They added in a statement they would collaborate on certain patent matters and likely begin working together in other areas.

Now, although they'll still compete across a broad spectrum, including operating systems, mobile services, and search, they almost appear to be getting along.

Maybe pigs really can fly.

## Apple Confirms QuickTime for Windows at End of Life

After an 11-year run, QuickTime for Windows is no more. Apple has confirmed it will no longer issue updates or patch security holes for the PC version of its multimedia software, meaning those who continue to use the software do so at their own risk.

Last week software security outfit Trend Micro disclosed the discovery of two new flaws in QuickTime 7 for Windows, saying Apple was informed of the security threats in November. At the time, Apple said it had no plans to issue a patch, adding the software "would be deprecated on Windows and the vendor would publish removal instructions for users."

Apple has yet to post an official announcement regarding the apparent deprecation, but on Monday confirmed the development to The Wall Street Journal.

As for the vulnerabilities, Trend Micro was able to trigger heap overflows by directing QuickTime to a malicious website or playing back an infected file, thereby opening the door to remote code execution. A common attack vector, heap overflow bugs let nefarious users install data-harvesting malware onto a target computer.

While the security firm has not seen instances of the flaw being exploited in the wild, it said uninstalling QuickTime is the only sure method of protection. With QuickTime deprecated, and its last update now three months old, Windows users are urged to uninstall the software to avoid potential security breaches. Apple in March published a step-by-step uninstall guide on its Support Pages website.

## Widespread Google Glitch Paralyzes Third-party Services

Google's tool for logging into third-party services went down Tuesday morning, paralyzing individuals and organizations who depend on it to access various systems and services.

Google OAuth is the system that enables you to log into a service (like, say, Pocket) with your Google or Gmail account. Many Twitter users reported the API associated with Google OAuth wasn't working at about 9:30 a.m. ET on Tuesday, locking them out of various services. The outage also disrupted Mashable's systems.

It's unclear how long the outage lasted, but most services tied to Mashable Google Apps accounts were restored after 11:30 a.m. ET.

The outage affected organizations who use Google Apps and depend on Google OAuth for access to many services. Mashable, for example, uses Google Apps to access Trello, SocialFlow and our primary CMS (content management system) in addition to basic Google services like Gmail, Calendar and Drive. To be clear, Google services still worked; the OAuth outage affected only logins to third-party services.

The outage may have been regional, as some Mashable staffers outside the United States reported some third-party logins were still working. However, most users trying to log into a service with a Google account were greeted with errors like

this:

Google OAuth error  
Google OAuth error

The outage follows a possibly unrelated Gmail disruption that occurred on Monday, according to Google's Apps Dashboard, which monitors service disruptions and outages across Google services. The Dashboard also shows a disruption to Google Drive on Tuesday.

With New Macs and OS X 10.12 on Deck, WWDC 2016 Could Run June 13-17

The 2016 edition of Apple's annual Worldwide Developers Conference may be later than usual this year, as the company gears up for OS X 10.12 and a wide-ranging refresh of its Mac lineup.

Checks of the Moscone Center in San Francisco by AppleInsider show that Moscone West Apple's preferred site for WWDC will be in use on June 1 as well as June 6 through 9. Given Apple's standard five-day WWDC window, that makes an early June event effectively impossible.

The company's chosen target is likely June 13 through 17, the only option giving it a full week. In fact the rest of the month is cut off, with conferences on stem cell research and Red Hat Linux already booked.

Still unknown is what products Apple might show this year. The company will almost certainly tease new versions of iOS and OS X, the latter of which could be rebranded as MacOS.

It may also announce new MacBooks during the event, if not before. Rumors of Apple's upgrade plans have been inconsistent, for instance suggesting that the company could axe the Air line, or revamp it by replacing the 11-inch model with a 15-inch one. If it eliminates the Air, it might still try to thin down the MacBook Pro. As for the company's 12-inch MacBook, an update may have to wait for the second half of the year, but also might not, and could potentially gain a 14- to 15-inch sibling.

The company is additionally overdue on updating its Mac Pro and Mac mini desktops. The Mini was last updated in October 2014, while the Pro is even more outdated, having been refreshed in December 2013.

How To Use Miitomo, The Adorable Avatar App Everyone Is Obsessed With

Being up-to-date with all things cool on the internet is the only thing that makes me feel young anymore. With responsibilities, bills, and all sorts of twentysomething life nonsense right around the corner, learning how to use Miitomo was a nice break from reality. Stepping away from having to pick new insurance for my car or making smart dating choices was super easy with this app. It let me escape my apartment and become a smaller character in my phone. A character that didn't need to cook for herself or do anything besides walk around the room aimlessly. (#Bless her heart.)

For those of you who haven't heard of it yet, Miitomo is an app that lets you create a tiny virtual version of yourself, with the ability to talk to your friend

s. You answer questions that allows the app to learn more about you, and that information is also available for any of your friends to see. Favorite food? Last time you cried? It's all there. By earning points and tickets you are also able to buy clothes and accessories to help your avatar look more like you. You can even manipulate the character's voice, quirkiness, and gesticulations. It's basically a more sophisticated Sims game. Let's get real, you only played Sims to build your character and house. And watch them have virtual sex with other Sims. Wait, just me? Ugh. I know I used every cheat code known to man in order to rack up cash. Now you don't have to do any of that. Just add friends and enjoy the ride.

I had a lot of fun testing out the features. I am still new so I wasn't sure where the games were, but unless I'm missing something, everything seemed pretty self explanatory. So grab your phone, download the free app and have a blast making a Mii character. Here I will show you a step-by-step guide on how to use the Mii app.

### 1. Get The App

It's free, unless you count the price of all the time you're about to waste using it. It will be your new obsession, trust me. Also ignore the 24 notifications for updates at the bottom. I'm pretty lazy about updating everything.

### 2. Creating Your Character

You get to design everything about this character's face and body. There are so many options.

Not only do you get styles, but you get colors and spacing. If your eyes are set farther apart or you have a tiny little nose, you will have the option to move things around. I chose freckles and thin lips for mine. It was like staring into a Mii mirror.

### 3. Personality

You get to create a voice for your Mii. There are different pronunciations, inflections and factors that can be tinkered with to create the character that best describes you and acts like you. My manipulations ended up making me outgoing and very expressive.

In all honesty I felt like I was a bit too expressive on this online version of reality. Every other word was spoken with my hands, and there was a lot of confetti being thrown around seconds into the game. This Mii was apparently very excited to exist.

### 4. Answer Questions

You can earn points by answering questions that pop up during the game.

Those coins can be used to buy clothing and play games to earn more clothing. Basically you are just a king of the wardrobe and nothing will stop you. Here are some choice answers I thought you would appreciate. The question is: what is my favorite food?

I took some serious liberties with these ones. And why not? Life is too short not to try and be funny. The next question was about the last thing I did before opening the game.

I got kind of mean with that one, huh? Oh well. VIRTUAL REALITY HAS NO RULES!

## 5. The Clothes

I didn't like the original outfit given to me, so I used the money the app rewarded me with to buy some cool duds.

The shirt was dope. The pants were too expensive for me to buy, so I just stuck with the grey pants my character came with. I spiced everything up with a banana peel. After all, they did say I was quirky!

## 6. Play Some Games

You pay money and then drop your character in a series of contraption to see where it will end up. It's a virtual arcade game that got me know prizes. Either way, it was fun watching a miniature version of myself, falling down a hole.

You can create your very own Mii any time! Enjoy, and have a great time getting sucked into the virtual rabbit hole.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

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